

REMARKS

This Response, submitted in response to the final Office Action dated October 27, 2005, is believed to be fully responsive to the points of rejection raised therein. Accordingly, favorable reconsideration on the merits is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 3, 4, 8-10, 12-15, 18-23, 39 and 41 are pending. Claims 3, 4, 8-10, 13-15 and 18-23 have been allowed. Claims 1 and 12 have been rejected under 35 USC 102(e) over US Patent No. 6,806,473 (Honda). Claims 39 and 41 have been rejected under 35 USC 103(a) over US Patent No. 5,757,878 (Dobbs), in view of Honda. Applicants respectfully submit the following remarks in support of the patentability of the claims.

1. Claims 1 and 12:

Claims 1 and 12 have been rejected under 35 USC 102(e) over Honda.

Honda was filed in the US on July 22, 2002 and was published on February 6, 2003.

The present application was filed on July 25, 2002. Accordingly, the February 6, 2003 publication is not prior art.

Attached hereto please find a declaration under 37 CFR 1.131 and Exhibits A and B to establish that Applicants invented the subject matter of the present application prior to the July 22, 2005 filing date of Honda. Accordingly, Honda does not qualify as prior art under any provision of 35 USC 102.

In view of the above, Applicants respectfully request that the rejections of Claims 1 and 12 under 35 USC 102(e) be withdrawn.

2. Claims 39 and 41:

Claims 39 and 41 have been rejected under 35 USC 103(a) over Dobbs, in view of Honda. As noted by the Examiner on pages 4-5 of the Office Action, Dobbs does not disclose a number of the recitations of Claims 39 and 41. To supply these elements of

Claims 39 and 41, the Examiner cites Honda. However, as noted above, Honda does not qualify as prior art under any provision of 35 USC 102.

In view of the above, Applicants respectfully submit that a prima facie case of obviousness under 35 USC 103(a) has not been established, and Applicants respectfully request that the rejections of Claims 39 and 41 under 35 USC 103(a) be withdrawn.

3. Claims 3, 4, 8-10, 13-15 and 18-23:

The Examiner indicated that Claims 3, 4, 8-10, 13-15 and 18-23 have been allowed.

In view of the above, Applicants respectfully submit that all of the pending claims 1, 3, 4, 8-10, 12-15, 18-23, 39 and 41 are in condition for allowance.

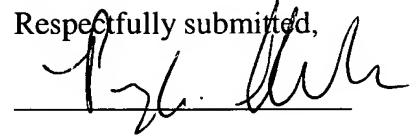
CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that the application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of the application are respectfully requested.

Please charge all applicable fees associated with the submittal of this Amendment and any other fees applicable to this application to the Assignee's Deposit Account No. 07-0868.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further is needed to place the application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact Applicants' undersigned representative at the telephone number below.

Respectfully submitted,



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